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The concept of shame in Western discourse has often carried a lesser moral significance than guilt. Unlike guilt that pertains to one's actions and intentions, shame relates to one's affects and emotions. While guilt is of an essentially mimetic and identificatory nature, the logic that underlies shame is of a specular kind: the experience of shame depends on the awareness of being exposed to a shaming gaze, and therefore on the consciousness of an autonomous self that is not immersed in the interpersonal dynamic to the same extent as the guilty self. Although shame is clearly not without ties to action because it is mostly experienced as an immediate consequence of one's deeds, the feeling of shame indicates both a shortcoming in behavior and a flaw in personality. One can, indeed, experience shame as a product of faulty conduct but unlike embarrassment or regret shame touches one on a deeper existential level, and even though it does not necessarily reveal a real personality flaw it always implies self-questioning. As Ruth Leys has recently put it, whereas "guilt concerns your actions, that is, what you do, or what you wish or fantasize you have done," "shame is held to concern not your actions but who you are, that is, your deficiencies and inadequacies as a person as these are revealed to the shaming gaze of the other."[1] According to this

[1]Ruth Leys, *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007) 11.

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conceptual convention, a product of a long tradition in psychoanalysis and psychology—Leys's principal references include Sigmund Freud, Sandor Ferenczi, Anna Freud, Silvian Tomkins, Donald Nathanson, Paul Ekman, and Carroll Izard, but one could add a parallel tradition in phenomenology and existentialism from Max Scheler to Jean-Paul Sartre—shame is secondary to guilt in terms of morality and ethics because it is too entangled in the struggle for recognition, and thus too much absorbed in the self rather than the other.

The ethical relevance of guilt and shame becomes more ambiguous once these concepts are applied in historically complex, ethically challenging and morally troublesome situations and events. It becomes questionable, for example, to explain phenomena such as survivor's guilt by principles that have been traditionally associated with the notion of guilt (in particular, the logic of complicity and regressive identification with the aggressor or the original traumatic scene). So much so that Giorgio Agamben has made a plea against the very concept of the survivor's guilt, arguing that the reaction of those who returned from concentration camps, feeling guilty that it was they who survived and not someone else, be seen as an inability—quite an understandable one, he adds, given the extreme circumstances—to deal with one's feeling of shame.[2] What exactly, then, asking after Agamben and beyond the academic discipline of trauma studies, are the ethical and political stakes at play in the shift of emphasis from guilt to shame? Moreover, since most theoretical conclusions about guilt and shame have been made about and from the perspective of the victim, how would the ethical and political concerns at work in this shift reflect the change of focus from the victim to situations where one was a silent accomplice (e.g., the gray majority during Nazism and Communism), or where the boundary between the victim and the perpetrator is hopelessly complex (e.g., different groups justifying and enforcing their rights over the same land), or where one does not perceive oneself as perpetrator but is perceived as one (e.g., descendants of colonizers born, and at home, in colonies fighting for independence)?

The last case is that of Albert Camus, the story of whose controversial political views during the Algerian war has been widely debated and is well known by now: a *pied noir*, a Frenchman born in Algeria, Camus saw himself as an Algerian and throughout the 1950s argued against

[2]Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999) 88.

Algerian independence because he feared it would lead to the expulsion of people, cultures and values deemed foreign but considered by Camus intrinsic to the diverse fabric of Algeria. Although Camus carefully avoided taking sides, his stance implied a conservative position of preserving the current state of Algeria as part of France that, both then and now, meant a deplorable opposition to the historical process of decolonization. In response to challenges to this position, Camus drew attention to violence. In *L'Homme révolté* (1951) he already argued that terror—both the real violence and the violence of "une subjectivité interminable qui s'impose aux autres comme objectivité"[3]—is inadmissible as a principle of political action, and during the war he criticized the emphasis on history and historical progress, espoused most notably by Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon, as an excuse to justify violence in the name of political messianism and philosophical Manicheism. After his arguments against violence were dismissed as an a-political moralism, Camus, wary of fueling both the discursive and the actual violence, turned to literature to explicate his ethical and political vision. *La Chute* (1956) and *L'Exil et le royaume* (1957), the last literary texts published during his life, returned not only to *L'Homme révolté* to recast its call for dialogue but also to the themes of guilt and shame present in Camus's fiction since *L'Étranger* (1942). In these narratives from the early stages of the Algerian war—that is, a time when Camus still hoped for a peaceful coexistence before the escalation of violence increased his despair, inciting his withdrawal and work on the autobiographic and heavily nostalgic novel *Le Premier Homme*—guilt and shame marked the troubled rapport between ethics and politics, as well as literary figurations of their reconciliation.

When *La Chute* came out in 1956, Maurice Blanchot immediately hailed it as a narrative of metaphysical self-interrogation and disobedience. The novella concerns a Parisian lawyer, a self-proclaimed defender of the wretched, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, who, after realizing the hypocrisy of his humanistic behavior when he failed to help a drowning woman, settles in Amsterdam and spends his days recounting his story of guilt to strangers. In Blanchot's reading, *La Chute* becomes a tale of existential "lucidité."[4] Like Oedipus, Blanchot argues, Clamence has fallen because he was too close to truth, courageously leaving for an exile in which he would not have to live "quiètement et hypocritement"

[3]Albert Camus, *L'Homme révolté, Essais*, ed. R. Quilliot and L. Faucon (Paris: Gallimard, 1965) 646.

[4]Maurice Blanchot, "La chute: la fuite" (1956), *L'Amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) 228.

(232). Interestingly enough, Blanchot does not pay much attention to the context and the specifics of Clamence's continuous flow of self-reproaches. The fact that the conversation with the unknown traveler is in fact a monologue is, in Blanchot's comparison of Clamence to Oedipus's "dialogue solitaire" with the silent company of gods (228), not Clamence's fault: Clamence's speech falls into unreality only on account of his interlocutor's vagueness and immobility. The rationale of "La Chute: la fuite" is unmistakable: Blanchot reads this *récit* as an enactment of the argument from *L'Homme révolté*, interpreting it as a story of revolt against the exile of the human race in the world.

Although the affinity between *La Chute* and *L'Homme révolté* is undeniable, Blanchot's metaphysical argument comes at the expense of the political case against monologues. In the oft-quoted statement that denounces monologues as manifestations of violence, Camus famously remarked that "le dialogue, relation des personnes, a été remplacé par la propagande ou la polémique, qui sont deux sortes de monologue."[5] Considering the prominence of guilt in *La Chute*, as well as the effect on this narrative of the notorious Sartre-Camus controversy regarding *L'Homme révolté*, *La Chute* certainly tried to do more than merely exemplify the logic of revolt. As Debarati Sanyal demonstrated, *La Chute* stages and responds to the critique of *L'Homme révolté* by performing the kind of totalizing approach previously criticized as the logic of mastery that leads to terror.[6] In other words, Clamence's confessional monologue shows not only that the seemingly virtuous bourgeois lifestyle is far from innocent and that the private revolt is inconsolable, but also that what lacks in dialogue and abounds with aggression is the self-punitive confession of guilt as much as the overt propaganda.

In *La Chute*, the boundary between admiration and shame, virtue and vice, pride and guilt is very thin indeed. It is Clamence himself who, after walking away from the cries of the drowning woman, draws attention to this liminality. He realizes that as a lawyer he was helping others only in safe situations in which he could be admired for his honorable behavior, and that he needed and cherished the wretchedness of others. Like Saint Augustine, who reports a similar, if even more ingenuous, fondness for the suffering of others, and whose *Confessiones* Camus read on a number of occasions, Clamence admits that he did not want to eradicate injustices, for they allowed

[5]Camus, *L'Homme révolté*, *Essais*, 642.
[6]Debarati Sanyal, "Broken Engagements," *Yale French Studies* 98 (2000): 37.

him to be popular and to feel good about himself. As Camus suggests, Clamence romanticized and over-identified with the misery of others—a sign of self-involvement rather than openness to others.[7] After this realization, Clamence curiously decides to go to Amsterdam instead of either staying in Paris and repenting or running far away. By choosing Amsterdam, which the text presents as a replica of Paris—with the canals replacing the Seine and the scandalous deportation of Jews the drowning woman—Clamence decides to remember the past and examine the self-centeredness of his former life, but to do so in a semi-detached fashion. In the cultural familiarity and yet geographical distance of Amsterdam, Clamence's atonement turns into a mere diatribe of self-accusations. What Clamence practiced as an honorable behavior for his sympathetic witnesses in Paris he now performs in the form of self-derogatory monologues for his quiet companions in Amsterdam. Like the Parisian intellectuals whom he condemns as "des juges pénitents" for reproaching themselves only so that they could attack someone else, he now accuses himself as well in order to justify his judgment of others. Turning Clamence into just another remorseful judge, *La Chute* unfolds a complex system of identification and disidentification that mimics the logic of non-oppositionality between admiration and shame, virtue and vice, and pride and guilt. Not only is Clamence's self-accusation inextricably bound with the accusation of others but his repentance repeats the same selfishness that governed his previous life in Paris.

With guilt appearing in a variety of forms in *La Chute*, it is not simply a question of whether Clamence is responsible for his actions or whether his guilty feelings are the appropriate response to the event of drowning; it is equally a question of whether his enactment of guilt does justice to the ethical implications that the notion of guilt, as Camus posits it, entails. Blanchot, for example, when he returned to *La Chute* after Camus's death, tried to exonerate Clamence, arguing that he cannot be held responsible because, if he is guilty at all, his fault "ne se situe pas au niveau de l'âme, mais du corps."[8] As in "La Chute: la fuite," here as well Blanchot downplays the event of drowning into a secondary accident, one among others in Clamence's life of revolt, and speculates that unlike Clamence who is a city-dweller and thus naturally afraid of the cold water, Meursault, with his "jeune

[7]For this argument, see also Camus, "Avant-propos à 'La Maison du Peuple' de Louis Guilloux" (1953), *Essais*, 1111–12.

[8]Maurice Blanchot, "Le Détour vers la simplicité" (1960), *L'Amitié*, 226.

vigueur" (ibid.), would have saved the woman.[9] In her seminal study of *La Chute*, Shoshana Felman shifts the emphasis from the question of Clamence's accountability for his actions to the question of his experience of the event. Following her hypothesis that certain events disrupt the ability of those who undergo them to bear witness, while at the same time exposing them to the unconscious compulsion to return to these events, Felman interprets Clamence's failure to recall the event as a protective shielding from its trauma. For Felman, *La Chute* is a narrative stylization of what she calls a "missed encounter with reality" because the event this story is built around enters Clamence's speech only "in so far as it is *not experienced*, in so far as it is literally *missed*."[10] Although Felman makes a convincing case that by staging Clamence's failure to bear witness, *La Chute* turns its readers into Clamence's silent interlocutors, and thus paradoxically succeeds in figuring the event, Clamence does not seem as traumatized as Felman asserts.

Felman's reading disregards Camus's irony and its place in his late work. Oscillating between confessing his guilt and undermining it through ironies, identifications and disidentifications, Clamence often relates to the events that traumatized him lucidly and occasionally with a sense of impudence. After the lamentation "'O jeune fille, jette-toi encore dans l'eau pour que j'aie une seconde fois la chance de nous sauver tous les deux!" for example, he teasingly adds that fortunately it is too late for this, as he would not want to enter the cold water.[11] Or, similarly, when at the beginning he guides his companion to the hotel, he stops in front of the bridge saying that he never goes further because, should someone jump into the water, he would either have to fish him out, which is a great risk "dans la saison froide," or leave him there, which can cause one "étranges courbatures" (19). With his witty and playful self-reproaches, Clamence is, as Dominick LaCapra points out, far from a bystander and a victim of trauma.[12] Clamence enjoys his eloquence, constantly drawing attention to the thematic sophistication and rhetorical playfulness of his speech. And yet, while this display of sophistication is very seductive, turning both Clamence's interlocutor and the reader of *La Chute* into his accom-

[9]Blanchot, "Le Détour vers la simplicité" 226.

[10]Shoshana Felman, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 167, 168 [italics in the original].

[11]Camus, *La Chute* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956) 152 [hereafter cited in text].

[12]Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998) 85–86.

plices—which depending on the perspective could be interpreted with Felman as an ethical device in the service of witnessing, or with Colin Davis as a narrative act of domination that extends Clamence's violent monologue[13]—it is clear that at least on some level the reader and the interlocutor do not comply. In fact, the reader is frequently reminded to resist Clamence's seductiveness and not to acquiesce to his discourse. With Clamence's often ironic and always highly self-conscious speech—"Moi, moi, moi, voilà le refrain de ma chère vie" (53)—the act of domination on which the narrative principle of *La Chute* rests is never hidden and can thus hardly be an act of effective domination or an innocent staging of witnessing.

The central place of guilt in *La Chute* is determined both by the logic of terror, violence and selfishness borrowed from *L'Homme révolté*, and by the prominent role of irony in *La Chute*. Clamence's guilt successfully brings both sides together as it, on the one hand, ironically embodies Sartre's critique of Camus's fear of history—which Sartre memorably framed as the fear of entering the waters of history and merely testing them with a finger—and, on the other hand, deliberately plays on the mechanism of perpetuating guilt. This mechanism, Clamence declares, is the foundation of our culture: we lay blame on each other and then all feel guilty, while by the same stroke seeking, and granting ourselves, absolution (116). By linking our culture of guilt to a bourgeois goal of "une vie propre" (11), Clamence asserts Paris and Amsterdam as exemplars of this lifestyle of remorseful judges—everyone there conforms to a desire for a clean and proper life by following the never-ending ritual of guilt, blame and absolution.

Although Clamence often seems to believe that he passes judgments on others from a safe distance, he is not immune to what he criticizes. Like others in Paris and Amsterdam, he shows appreciation for cleanliness and purity, having chosen to live in the Jewish quarter that, as he says, was "cleaned" of Jews, and like others, he is full of blame and guilt. The historical events such as Nazism, collaboration and colonialism that Clamence evokes with an uneasy mix of deprecation and irony betray his anxieties and bring to the fore both his conscious choices and unconscious erasures of the past. By blaming himself, then justifying his behavior, only to make it clear that it cannot be forgiven, Clamence reveals that the cleansing of guilt is impossible because the logic of guilt and absolution reproduces it

[13] Colin Davis, *Ethical Issues in Twentieth-Century French Fiction: Killing the Other* (London: Macmillan, 2000) 77.

endlessly. Perhaps the original title intended for *La Chute*—*La Jugement dernier*—would be more apt to underscore this point and bring the critical purpose of the story's irony into sharper relief: although guilt is a form of remembering and repenting, it is essentially self-engaged. What Camus suggests in *La Chute* is that guilt and the monologic brooding over one's guilt perpetuate the violence and self-involvement that have led to the unethical action.

Despite the fact that *La Chute* was originally conceived as part of *L'Exil et le royaume*, it was published separately both because of its essentially ironic nature and because the exile represented by Amsterdam was not the kind of refuge that, in Camus's imagination, led to freedom.[14] Unlike *La Chute*, stories in *L'Exil et le royaume* have a less garrulous and more exhausted pace. Lacking the biting irony and the rambling preoccupation with the self caught in the temporal net of memory, history and guilt, these stories are stylistically more reserved, drawing attention to their slowness and weariness, and emphasizing spatial rather than temporal motifs. This slow and meditative rapport to the landscape in which one is exiled and which forms a bond common to those who are equally cast out in it is what Camus offers as an alternative to the failed exile of *La Chute*. In "L'Hôte," for example, land is described as "l'étendue solitaire où rien ne rappelait l'homme" and where none of the inhabitants had any rights or advantages over others.[15] Since "dans ce désert, personne, ni lui ni son hôte n'étaient rien; et pourtant, hors de ce désert, ni l'un ni l'autre n'auraient pu vivre vraiment" (113), the story proposes that both of its protagonists share the harshness of the land and that they should share it actively, as a form of revolt against the human condition advocated in *L'Homme révolté*. Seen within the context of Camus's essayistic writings from the mid-fifties, the prominence of the land, together with the stylistic austerity, narrative slowness and emphasis on shame rather than guilt, promote Camus's argument for a peaceful cohabitation of the various ethnic groups living in Algeria. As narrative devices, they are designed to minimize the drive for closure and representational definiteness that epitomizes political violence and in which literature inevitably participates.

[14]One could imagine "Le Renégat" published on its own as well, as it differs from the rest of *L'Exil et le royaume* in both tone and theme. In fact, it shares more with *La Chute* than with other stories in the collection because, like *La Chute*, it represents an essentially flawed type of exile, and, like *L'Homme révolté*, it tries to demonstrate how zealotry tends to turn the ideals of love and perfection into their violent imposition.

[15]Camus, *L'Exil et le royaume* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957) 108 [hereafter cited in text].

Clearly enough, Camus's appreciation for moral dilemmas and the shared land in *L'Exil et le royaume* is not without its problems. Francis Jeanson stressed Camus's dubious disregard of the relevance of history for a theory of social justice already in the early fifties.[16] The trying proposition of many of Camus's works from the second half of that decade suggests that what unites Algerians is not the common history but the land on which they happen to be—or, as *Le Premier Homme* puts it, the fact that they are "sans racines."[17] After the numerous instances in which Edward Said and other postcolonial critics exposed the Western erasures of pre-colonial local histories, this is a provocative suggestion.[18] While the stories in *L'Exil et le royaume* introduce important ethical issues, what is politically problematic about their guiding principle of tolerance is that it circumvented the gravity of the struggle for Algerian independence. In order to justify the federalist mode of coexistence and the controversially all-inclusive understanding of Algerianness, Camus referred to the austere beauty of the land that elevates all who live there—Arabs, Berbers, the French, Italians, Turks, and Jews—above their ethnic and cultural differences.[19] In some of the stories, Camus gets disturbingly close to the depiction of colonies as a source of ecstatic vastness, purifying passivity, and facile unanimity that has dominated Western portrayals of colonies for centuries. In "La Femme adultère," for example, the protagonist Janine, a French woman living in Algeria alienated from other colonists and wishing to open herself to the foreign land, perceives the Algerian desert as a silent void without people. When she invokes the nomadic inhabitants of the desert, it is only as imaginary figures that suit her acute need to change her life, stop time and start living in the present moment, without having much to do with the actual place and people. Unlike D'Arrast from "La Pierre qui pousse" who makes an attempt to talk to the natives, showing preference for those who are less reverent of him than the local elites, and who in the end manages to win the sympathy of those who previously kept their distance from him, Janine remains locked in her private dream of freedom. In a way, she is not far from

[16]Francis Jeanson, "Albert Camus ou l'âme révolté," *Les Temps modernes* 79 (Mai 1952): 2089.

[17]Camus, *Le Premier Homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994) 179.

[18]Lawrence D. Kritzman raises this issue when arguing that Camus's ethic of accommodating differences is based on forgetting and thus on the erasure of the past wrongs. See Kritzman, "Camus's Curious Humanism or the Intellectual in Exile," *MLN* 112. 4 (1997): 560.

[19]Camus, "Algérie 1958," *Essais*, 1012.

Clamence, who wishes for a second chance but admits that keeping it only as a dream is easier because one does not have to actually enter the cold water or the inhospitable desert.

But despite the fact that *L'Exil et le royaume* balances precariously on that convenient ignorance and self-serving Orientalism by which the West has so often related to the rest of the world, the land and the people in these stories never operate as mere vehicles for Europeans to deterritorialize themselves. While it is true that Janine perceives the Arabs and the nomads in a stereotypical fashion by focusing on their attire, gaze and pride, Camus draws our attention to these clichés instead of hiding them or simply reproducing them. Unlike Clamence, Janine shows a genuine, even if romanticized, admiration for the locals, repeatedly emphasizing her concern for her corpulence and dependency, wishing to shed both her weight and possessions and be more like the locals (33). However politically contentious, the ethical motivation of Camus's focus on the land is unequivocal: the land in these stories functions as an ahistorical force that alleviates the dividing effects of history, religion and culture. Following Camus's image of Algeria as "communautés aux personnalités différentes,"[20] the plainness of the Algerian land in *L'Exil et le royaume* is presented as a medium that brings the various peoples closer to each other, allowing them to see the otherness of others and accept it. Muteness and emptiness here are meant to connect rather than separate; or, as Maurice Blanchot notes, separate while showing that the men and the things separated communicate "au sein même de la séparation."[21] Although the ethically complex situations unfold on the same barren stage in all stories in *L'Exil et le royaume* that take place in Algeria, they get the most manifest treatment in "L'Hôte," a story that articulates most powerfully Camus's emphasis on shame as an ethical and political concept that promotes coexistence.

In "L'Hôte," a story about a French-Algerian schoolteacher's ethical dilemma about whether to deliver an Arab criminal to prison or set him free, the theme of shame enters the scene inconspicuously, via the topoi of hospitality and fraternity. With the deliberate play on its title, "L'Hôte" depicts a situation in which it is unclear who the host and the guest are, and in which each of the three characters has to accommodate the other two despite their conflicting convictions and allegiances. On the most obvious plane, Daru is the host,

[20] Camus, "L'Algérie nouvelle" (1958) *Essais*, 1016.
[21] Maurice Blanchot, "Le Détour vers la simplicité," 223.

and the Arab and Balducci (the gendarme who brings the Arab to Daru's house) the guests, although both Balducci and the Arab are uneasy about their role as guests and Daru is equally troubled by his role of the host. At the same time, however, it is Daru, a *pied noir*, and Balducci, a Corsican, who are the guests. They are, as Jacques Derrida's elegant phrase has it, "chez soi chez l'autre," in the land to which the Arab has his own, and arguably more legitimate, rights.[22] The concrete historical situation here changes the polarized position of the colonizer and the colonized—the position in which the colonizer is away from home but dominant and the colonized is at home but subordinate—into what Colin Davis has recently addressed as a situation in which one "is neither at home nor away from home (or is both), and is neither persuasively dominant nor genuinely subordinate."[23] This intricate interplay of identities and roles creates a discomfiting tension between hospitality and suspicion, fraternity and opposition, and kindness and anger that determines the way in which the events in the story unfold.

When Balducci brings the Arab to Daru's house, Daru invites them in without asking about the purpose of their visit, kneeling next to the detainee and offering him tea. Although the feeling of shame makes Daru untie the Arab, from the very beginning Daru's hospitality is not effortless. After learning that the Arab killed his own cousin in a family squabble, Daru has to fight his anger and hesitation whether to offer him another cup of tea. Daru gets increasingly uneasy about the situation into which the Arab's crime put him, refusing to have anything to do with Balducci's orders to deliver the Arab to prison the next day. Mirroring the struggle to grant it, hospitality is equally difficult to accept. The Arab looks at Daru with the same mistrustful gaze and cannot hide his surprise when Daru offers to eat with him. The same difficulty pertains to fraternity. Even though there is a sense of union between Daru and Balducci—revealed when Daru confirms that he would join Balducci and others in the suppression of the Arab revolt—Daru is reticent to Balducci's evocations of duty and camaraderie. This simultaneous openness to and reserve about fraternity pertains to Daru's relation with the Arab as well. While Daru has a fleeting experience of brotherhood with the Arab when they, like

[22]Jacques Derrida, "Être chez soi chez l'autre," *Idiomes, nationalités, déconstructions: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida,* ed. Jean-Jacques Forté (Casablanca: Les Éditions Toubkal, 1998) 255.

[23]Colin Davis, "Diasporic Subjectivities," *French Cultural Studies* 17.3 (2006): 343.

"soldats ou prisonniers" (118), share the room at night—a sentiment echoed by the Arab who asks if Balducci will be taking him to prison and if Daru could go with them—he is mostly afraid and alert. As some other works from this time—"Terrorisme et répression," for instance, which mentions a danger of fraternity,[24] or *La Chute*, which refers ironically to "un grand sentiment de fraternité" (146)—"L'Hôte" is skeptical about all forms of fraternity under the present circumstances. And yet, in spite of putting both fraternity and hospitality into question, "L'Hôte" does not simply subvert them. The story redefines—or, as Eve Célia Morisi proposes, "de-ritualizes"—fraternity and hospitality, adapting them to the historical moment of ambiguous social roles and diasporic identities.[25]

Hospitality and fraternity, shame and honor, and ethics and politics all converge in the penultimate scene in which Daru brings the young Arab to the juncture and lets him choose between the path that leads to prison and the one that leads to the nomads in the desert. Even though Daru, following the rules of hospitality, provides the Arab with food and money in case he chooses the desert, his act is not without harshness, as he rebuffs at the Arab's pleas for a talk and simply walks away. Here Daru, again, displays his difficulty in dealing with the demands of the situation, showing that he is far from exemplifying, as Elizabeth Hart believes, a decidedly ethical stance as opposed to Balducci's unethical one.[26] Fraternity in this scene is equally fickle. When after leaving the Arab, Daru turns and sees him staring back, he feels nauseous; and when he later finds him walking to prison, he realizes that although the political situation turns them both into exiles their commonality can never truly create a fraternal relation between the two of them. We do not know if the Arab chose prison in order to avoid Daru's persecution by the French authorities for disobeying the order. But regardless of whether he, like Daru, did not want to curtail the other's freedom, the outcome was precisely such. As the warning "'Tu as livré notre frère. Tu paieras.'" (124), which Daru finds in his room upon his return, demonstrates, the conventional type of fraternity in the end gains the upper hand, with Daru facing retribution from the Arabs who think he delivered their brother to jail.

Although Daru's and the Arab's decisions were determined by

[24]Camus, "Terrorisme et répression" (1955), *Essais*,1871.

[25]Eve Célia Morisi, "Camus hospitalier, Camus fraternel? Les impossibilités de 'L'Hôte' dans le contexte colonial," *French Forum* 32.1–2 (2007): 155.

[26]Elizabeth Hart, "Face à face: l'éthique lévinasienne dans 'L'Hôte,'" *Les Trois Guerres d'Albert Camus*, ed. Lionel Dubois (Poitiers: Éditions du Pont-Neuf, 1995) 173.

ethical considerations, historical circumstances rendered them ineffective, as any decision was bound to be interpreted as either an act of treason by the French or a sign of colonial allegiance by the Arabs. Camus, however, is not merely opposing ethical and moral acts to politics, thereby giving voice to what Albert Memmi described as a "colonisateur de bonne volonté," someone who points to the injustices of colonialism but is politically castrated and abandoned by both the colonizers and the colonized.[27] Camus displays here his awareness that the questionable stance of neutrality represented in Daru's refusal to take sides is not only politically ineffectual but also—quite unexpectedly—ethically inconsequential. By drawing attention to Daru's uneasiness about hosting the Arab and to his hopes that, as he imagined the Arab's escape at night, he would be relieved of the burden of responsibility, the story never hides Daru's search for an alibi. At the same time, however, it proposes that, in spite of Daru's refusal to make the political choice of either delivering or releasing the Arab, his alibistic decision to give a choice was not a-political. Although Daru's action did not represent a genuinely political act, it was political to the extent that giving the Arab a choice went against Daru's obligation to bring him to prison. This non-choice thus did not exactly endorse the status quo by refraining from taking political sides. "L'Hôte" shows that even when the colonial situation dooms ethical acts to fail on the political level, such acts are necessary because they threaten the value system of a colonial society.[28]

In a situation when acts can be neither political nor ethical and yet are never without political and ethical motivations and consequences, shame, Camus suggests, can serve as a guiding principle of action. It is from the point of view of shame that Daru's choice in "L'Hôte" appears as necessary. Had Daru acted differently, he would have betrayed either Balducci or the Arab, and would have been ashamed for doing so. Balducci's and the Arab's actions are determined by shame as well. All three characters constantly observe each other, pondering each other's actions and, aware of the difficulty of the other's position, often avert their gaze when their eyes meet. Shame here both allows for hospitality and fraternity, and undermines and redefines them. The logic of shame—its scopic nature that implies a

[27]Albert Memmi, "Portrait du colonisateur de bonne volonté," *Les Temps modernes* 134 (avril 1957).

[28]For this argument, see David Carroll, *Albert Camus, the Algerian: Colonialism, Terrorism, Justice* (New York: Columbia UP, 2007) 82.

sense of an autonomous self exposed to the shaming gaze, a practice which is often associated with the Arabic culture and which "L'Hôte" extends onto all three characters regardless of their ethnicity—is not only staged in this story but also, like hospitality and fraternity, subjected to a de-ritualizing trial. As Pierre Bourdieu argued in *Sociologie de l'Algérie* (1958), since in Algeria one's actions are constantly subjected to the gaze of others, the resulting behavioral framework of shame and honor turns one's autonomous self into a semblance of the self and thus into a being for others. Even though the three characters in "L'Hôte" share this behavioral paradigm and are therefore inextricably bound with each other, this story also shows that in a volatile milieu inhabited by ethnically diverse people with politically incongruent interests the communal dimension inherent to shame is not entirely unblemished.

While linking the characters together, shame in "L'Hôte" creates a difficult and essentially shattered whole. When Daru, for example, tells Balducci that he will not deliver the Arab to prison because it is "contraire à l'honneur" (120), Balducci admits that he too is sometimes ashamed of his behavior, as for instance when he brought the Arab tied up. Convinced that it nonetheless had to be done, Balducci appeals to his duty, something he believes he shares with Daru. For Daru, however, whatever communal dimension he and Balducci might have in common because of the imminent Arab revolt, it is not strong enough to make him disregard his sharp sense of shame. And yet, although Balducci's evocation of fraternity did not fall on fertile ground with Daru, it nevertheless managed to preclude Daru from taking an easy way out by simply putting shame above fraternity. When Balducci suddenly leaves—after Daru acted insulted when asked to sign the delivery papers, considering it a matter of personal honor that he would, if need be, corroborate the receipt of the prisoner—Daru suddenly feels ashamed of his rejection of Balducci's advances of sociality. Paradoxically, Daru's refusal of fraternity in the name of ethics has led to a bout of shame. We find similar instances of the way in which shame hampers the intersubjective bond while at the same time calling for it in Daru's relationship with the Arab prisoner, as for example when they share the meal. What all these instances reveal is that despite its inability to deliver a decisively positive sense of community under the present circumstances, shame is the only principle capable of securing at least some form of cohesion and cohabitation.

In Camus, shame represents an intersubjective link endowed with an

ample ethical charge. In "L'Hôte"—unlike in *La Chute,* where shame leads to an aggressive imposition of social order, exemplified by the scene in which Clamence, after being punched by an angry motorist to the shaming gaze of onlookers, imagines beating him back, saving his face and, "moitié Cerdan, moitié de Gaulle" (59), ruling by power and respect—the attempt to keep one's honor in the face of others implies respect for others rather than concern for self-recognition. Moreover, the spectatorial mechanism of shame, as Camus envisions it in this story, prescribes the kind of behavior that prevents everyone from experiencing shame. In other words, shame constitutes a collective dimension—however fractured and composed of individuals with incompatible political beliefs—both because as a shared code of morality it makes each individual act so as to avoid experiencing shame, and because it forces each character to act so that his behavior does not put others in shame. The fact that someone else's shame is often experienced as shameful also by those who witness it surfaces several times in "L'Hôte." The importance of this fact for Camus's evocation of shame as a regulative principle of one's actions—and opposed to the use of shaming as an instrument of socially cleansing violence—is illustrated by the prominence of an anecdote that appears in *L'Étranger*, *Réflexions sur la guillotine* and *Le Premier Homme*, and in which the father's witnessing of the public execution leads to his feeling of shame, a result of participating in the collective act of shaming someone else. Similarly, in a crucial scene in *Le Premier Homme*, Jacques's pride at winning the fight with Munoz turned into sadness when he, after seeing his crestfallen schoolmate, realized that "vaincre un homme est aussi amer que d'en être vaincu" (146).

In Camus's narratives, shame functions as an ethical principle which, while bestowing personal identity by making one aware of oneself, is inseparable from dialogue and thus from the communal dimension. As E. L. Constable demonstrated, in Camus's later work shame points to a "responsive ethics" instead of the solipsistic self-interrogation typical of some of Camus's early fiction.[29] "L'Hôte" is exemplary in this regard. Shame in this story is a form of empathy and dialogic self-questioning rather than a simple appeal to emotions. We find similar examples in other stories in *L'Exil et le royaume*. In "Les Muets," for example, the owner of a shop empathizes with the shame experienced by his workers when they have to return to work

[29]E. L. Constable, "Shame," *MLN* 112.4 (1997): 643.

after their unsuccessful strike, being himself ashamed that the bad financial situation of his shop prevents him from raising their salaries. Although the workers initially reject the owner's attempt to ameliorate their feelings, they become later ashamed of their unresponsiveness. As in "L'Hôte," also here the ethical disposition of shame implies a peculiar kind of humanism—in Camus's fiction shame determines whether one is or is not a man, whether one is a part of a community or not. When in "L'Hôte" Balducci wants to expresses his respect for Daru, he only says, "tu es d'ici, tu es un homme" (111). In the same way, when Meursault is tried for murder in *L'Étranger*, Céleste, trying to maintain his honor in front of the shaming gaze of the audience, defends him by declaring that everyone knows he is "un homme,"[30] a call reiterated in both *Le Premier Homme* where Jacques expresses his desire "à naître enfin comme homme" (181) and in *La Peste* where Rieux confesses that "ce qui m'intéresse, c'est d'être un homme."[31] Shame, Camus suggests in his novels and stories, pertains to one's deeds and the resulting emotions, as well as to who one is as a person and whether one belongs to humanity.

In the aftermath of the argument with Sartre and facing the outbreak of the Algerian war, Camus chose shame over guilt as the affect capable of alleviating the current crisis and doing justice to the ethical and political demands it raised. Unlike with guilt, which is rooted in the past and in internalized values, and which, as *La Chute* shows, can be rationalized, one cannot talk oneself out of shame. Shame is embedded in the gaze of the other and in the present moment, and since others cannot be disregarded when it comes to shame, it is not in the power of the self to overcome it. For Camus, shame pertains to how others see me, thus questioning, as Martha Nussbaum argued more recently, "the very being of the person who feels it."[32] Sartre, for his part, was not convinced of Camus's argument against guilt and in favor of shame in spite of his belief that *La Chute*, with its scathing critique of guilt, was Camus's best work.

Although Sartre was aware that the identificatory logic of guilt implies the bond of complicity—and is thus problematic ethically (suggesting that the victim and the perpetrator are interdependent) and politically (perpetuating violence through the dialectic of hatred)—

[30]Albert Camus, *L'Étranger, Théâtre, récits, nouvelles*, ed. R. Quilliot (Paris: Gallimard, 1962) 1191.

[31]Camus, *La Peste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947) 230.

[32]Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004) 207.

guilt for him serves the important task of instigating political life. According to Sartre, guilt has to be cultivated because it stimulates action, as it did in his own case when it forced him to compensate both for his previous insufficient engagement (i.e., *la Résistance*) and for his identity (i.e., being a bourgeois rather than a worker, a writer rather than an activist). Camus, on the other hand, proposed dialogue, that is, a suspension of action. Even though both Sartre and Camus accused each other of the same political myopia caused by the abstractness of the ideal of justice the other promoted—in Camus's case rooted in the idealistic and abstract understanding of revolt, and in Sartre's in the ideologically fabricated ideal of the future—Camus believed that Sartre's prototype of action was unacceptable because it justified injustices in the present in the name of the grand unconditional justice in the future. Politics, Camus suggested in his literary answers to Sartre, cannot serve as a vehicle for mollifying one's guilty self, because guilt, like physical violence and the struggle for recognition, is a dialectical trap and a self-perpetuating cycle. In Camus's late fiction, this political plea for the suspension of action found its expression in the exhausted style and minimal forms. From *La Chute* to *L'Exil et le royaume*, Camus moved away from irony—which due to its "instability," as Wayne Booth's term indicates, triggers an endless chain of negations—toward the aesthetic of plainness, slowness and stylistic austerity that was designed to weaken the dialectic of violence.

Against guilt and the dynamic of its overcoming, Camus's late narratives insist on the ethical significance of shame and on the political import of its socially cementing effect. The ethics and the politics these stories convey reveal that the two are inseparable. For Camus, shame always raises the question of who one is as related to others—an observation that, as Bernard Williams illustrated in his acclaimed study, applies across both time and space.[33] But as Camus's stories show, shame never implies a facile communality in which differences are overcome or simply erased. At the historical moment of proliferating diasporic subjectivities, shame represented for Camus the possibility of coexistence that did not imply suppression of identities. In a difficult situation in which the social and the cultural roles become unstable, and in which one's political allegiance based on ethnicity and nationhood turns equally problematic, shame preserves identity rather than suspends it. Unlike guilt and without moralism, shame affirms—as Eve

[33]Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993) 90–93.

Kosofsky Sedgwick demonstrates in her recent revival of this notion for the subject of queer identities, and against the psychoanalytic emphasis on identity-formation as a regressive identification with the traumatic scene—the irreducibility of each identity in its difference from others.[34] Camus suggests that the exposure to the other's gaze in shame both contests one's identity and institutes it, all the while preventing this identity from being forcefully imposed onto others. Shame, in other words, offers a political model of interaction that acknowledges the singularity of identity without instigating the dialectic that confines it into a violent oppositionality.

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[34]Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003) 63.